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INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 4950
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 1908
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY 1387
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 1054
RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA PRIORITY 8888
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA PRIORITY 1381
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE PRIORITY 2298
RUEHKSO/AMCONSUL SAPPORO PRIORITY 9932
RUEHSH/AMCONSUL SHENYANG PRIORITY 0419
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI PRIORITY 6236
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RHMFISS/COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA AB JA PRIORITY
RUAGAAA/COMUSKOREA SEOUL KOR PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 2552
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 006639

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SUBJECT: JAPAN NGO'S "SHIOKAZE" PROGRAM BROADCASTS NEWS
ABOUT ABDUCTIONS TO NORTH KOREA

REF: TOKYO 06493

Classified By: Ambassador J.Thomas Schieffer. Reasons 1.4 (B) (D)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. The Investigation Commission on Missing Japanese Probably Related to North Korea (COMJAN), an NGO established to investigate suspected cases of abduction by the DPRK, began transmitting its "Shiokaze" ("Sea Breeze") short-wave radio broadcasts to North Korea in October 2005. The twice-daily broadcasts reach as far as the U.S., Europe, Southeast Asia, and New Zealand. COMJAN receives support from conservative trade unions, political groups associated with Diet members belonging to the dissolved Democratic Socialist Party (DSP), and opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) Diet members. Financial support nevertheless remains uneven, and COMJAN officials are concerned that misleading media reports about government support for Shiokaze will result in a drop in private donations to the organization. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) In October 2005, the Investigation Commission on Missing Japanese Probably Related to North Korea (COMJAN), an NGO established to investigate suspected cases of abduction by the DPRK, began transmitting short-wave "Shiokaze" ("Sea Breeze") radio broadcasts to North Korea. Shiokaze, which delivers information on the abduction issue to Japanese nationals who have been taken to the DPRK, originates from a tiny studio in the corner of COMJAN's downtown Tokyo offices. Transmissions are sent using a British company, VT Communications, via an antenna located in Taiwan.

Daily Programming

¶3. (U) The station produces two daily programs:

-- Broadcast #1: 0530-0600 at 9645Khz, in Japanese.
Presenters: 1) read the names of missing Japanese citizens believed to have been abducted by the DPRK, 2) read letters from family members of the missing to relatives who they believe are being held by Pyongyang, and 3) present messages from family members.

-- Broadcast #2: 2200-2230 at 9950Khz, in Japanese, Chinese, and English. Announcers: 1) "Call" to suspected abductees in each of the three languages, 2) Present news on the abduction issue (e.g. Megumi Yakota's DNA test results), and current events (e.g. Six-Party Talks, Kim Jong-il's succession, DPRK counterfeiting efforts), and 3) read letters from family members.

14. (U) Shiokaze broadcasts reach the DPRK, ROK, Japan, and the PRC-North Korea border. COMJAN officials report hearing from listeners as far as the U.S., UK, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, France, Sweden, Norway, Finland, the Russian Federation, Australia, New Zealand, and Indonesia. The DPRK, according to a May 2006 statement released by then-Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe (current prime minister), routinely attempts to jam Shiokaze's signal.

Abduction Groups Linked

15. (U) COMJAN originated in January 2003 as an off-shoot of the National Association for the Rescue of Japanese Citizens Kidnapped by North Korea (NARKN), a group that supports the families of 23 Japanese citizens that NARKN members claim have been abducted (17 persons officially recognized by Japanese authorities, plus an additional 6 that NARKN believes should be added to the government's official list). Several NARKN members created COMJAN to respond to the large number of inquiries from the general public about relatives who had disappeared under unknown circumstances) inquiries

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that NARKN had been unequipped to handle. COMJAN officials readily admit that many of these additional missing persons reports will never be resolved, and that individuals often disappear for reasons not related to the abduction issue: criminal activity, accidents, runaways, etc. However, COMJAN recognizes approximately 460 individuals (out of the hundreds of reports the group receives) as potential additional victims of North Korean abduction. COMJAN Representative Kazuhiro Araki noted that NARKN works to "rescue" individuals who have been abducted, while COMJAN "investigates" reports of missing individuals to determine whether they have been abducted or are missing for some other reason. COMJAN and NARKN officials maintain a close working relationship, Araki said. Araki, who also worked for the DSP (where he was responsible for education, public affairs, and youth issues) after graduating from Keio University, is a professor at the Institute of Foreign Affairs at Takushoku University and a sergeant in Japan's Self-Defense Force. In 1993, Araki lost a bid for a Diet seat after campaigning as an independent candidate in the general election.

Conservative Political Support

16. (C) COMJAN receives backing from influential supporters, including the right-leaning Japanese Trade Union, and the Minsha Kyokai, a political group associated with the Democratic Social Association (DSA), comprised mainly of Diet members belonging to the dissolved Democratic Socialist Party (DSP). Kyokai members include opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) Representatives Tatsuo Kawabata, Jin Matsubara, and Keiichiro Asao.

Misleading Media Reports on Government Support

17. (C) COMJAN officials remain concerned about misleading media reports regarding government support for Shiokaze. COMJAN broadcaster Kenji Murao, referring to an October 11 Kyodo News Service bulletin indicating that the Ministry of

Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) will consider using Japan Broadcasting Service (NHK) facilities to broadcast Shiokaze, said that the Japanese government is examining, but has not yet decided, whether it should make such a move. Murao fears that inaccurate news stories that suggest that COMJAN will receive government financing will result in a drop in private donations to the organization. He stressed that MIC assistance, if approved, might be limited to supporting the Shiokaze program, not to offering aid to COMJAN. According to COMJAN,s FY2005 financial statement, 60 percent of revenue comes from public donations and patrons such as the Democratic Socialist Association. The balance derives from NARKN and sales of posters and souvenirs.

18. (C) On November 17, Tadasu Yano, Policy Secretary to LDP Simulation Team for Economic Sanctions Against North Korea Chairman Ichita Yamamoto, corrected a November 16 Yomiuri Shimbun story which reported that the LDP Special Committee on the Abduction Issue, which oversees the work of Yamamoto,s Simulation Team, had decided to support Shiokaze broadcasts to North Korea. According to Yano, the misunderstanding arose during a November 14 public session of the Special Committee. During the meeting, abductee family members criticized the Diet for failing to support the COMJAN broadcasts, in part, by asserting that "even the U.S. is indirectly providing money" to Shiokaze. (Note: We do not know on what basis the families made this claim.) Diet members, apparently under pressure, agreed to discuss, at some future date, the possibility of using fiscal 2007 funds to assist the short-wave program. Yano stressed, however, that the Special Committee had not yet decided whether to ask the full Diet to authorize financial support.
SCHIEFFER